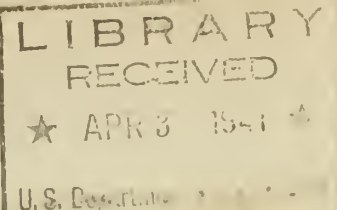


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Enriched Flour and Bread



Broadcast by Miss Ruth Van Deman, Bureau of Home Economics, and Dr. Russell M. Wilder, National Research Council, in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, Monday, March 17, 1941, by the National Broadcasting Company and associated Blue Network stations.

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ANNOUNCER:

Now, first Ruth Van Deman. And today Miss Van Deman has with her a guest-- Dr. Russell Wilder, Chairman of the Food and Nutrition Committee of the National Research Council.

RUTH VAN DEMAN:

Maybe you didn't know, Don Fisher, but this also is the Dr. Wilder who chairmanned the technical committee on the new enriched flour and bread.

ANNOUNCER:

Really. Why, this is practically like shaking hands with a vitamin.

WILDER:

No, no, nothing like that. Sorry, I'm afraid I haven't even a vitamin tablet in my pocket.

ANNOUNCER:

Well, I'm honored to meet you, sir, --- whether you're prepared to demonstrate a vitamin or not. I've been hearing a lot about this enriched flour and bread. And I'd like to know more.

VAN DEMAN:

This is your chance to hear direct from headquarters, Don. Dr. Wilder's been working for a long time to get more vitamins and minerals into white flour.

WILDER:

It has been quite a few years now, that some of us in the medical profession have been worried about the refined flour and cereal situation.

From the cases that have come to us we've seen more and more clearly that poor diet has a great deal to do with many ailments of the body and the mind. We've become aware that some of this was due to the subtle change that's come over our American diet in the last 80 years or so.

Along about 1870, when we began to replace the coarse dark flour of our pioneer days with patent white flour and began refining a lot of our other foods, we lost something --- something we could ill afford to lose.

VAN DEMAN:

The effects of all this, you feel, are showing up more now than they did in our father's and grandfather's day?

WILDER:

Unquestionably. The effects of poor diet are always cumulative --- they pile up from generation to generation. Or to put it another way poor diet undermines health deeper and deeper in each succeeding generation.

Take the animals in a laboratory where conditions are controlled, and it's easy to prove that. The results with humans are not so easy to trace. So many other things beside food have an influence on our health and growth and mental vigor. But the advent of the vitamin era has brought a lot of this out into the open.

VAN DEMAN:

One of the great benefits of this vitamin era, I thought, was to teach us to eat a wide variety of foods --- as many different kinds as possible. Then if we missed a vitamin in the bread we'll say, we'd catch up with it in the turnip greens or the glass of milk.

WILDER:

In general that is true, and right. But we have to remember this about the wheat berry, and the flour and products made from it. Wheat in its natural state provides thiamin generously. Thiamin also happens to be a vitamin that nature has been stingy with.

VAN DEMAN:

Yes, I realize thiamin is not found in many foods in large quantities. And I realize too that ordinary white flour as it comes from the mill has lost about nine-tenths of the thiamin, the vitamin B₁, of the natural grain.

WILDER:

And we've also learned recently that thiamin is essential to the proper use of starch by the body. We didn't realize what we were doing, of course. But in our effort to get a flour of superior keeping and baking qualities, we stripped it of one of its most precious food values, the very thing needed to help the body make proper use of the substances left --- the carbohydrates. Other food values went with the milling too. But I'm dwelling on the thiamin because of its scarcity in other foods and its importance to us in the proper handling of starch.

VAN DEMAN:

It looks as though we robbed Peter to pay Paul, and didn't get away with it.

WILDER:

That's just about it. As I said a moment ago, these mistakes in food habits carried on year after year and by generation after generation of a large number of families, roll up into a public health problem of major importance.

VAN DEMAN:

Which is, I suppose, the reason enriched bread is tied in with our present drive toward better nutrition.

WILDER:

Yes, but even as a defense measure enriched flour alone isn't going to solve our problem of malnutrition by any means. But I do believe it will help millions of people in this country to be better fed.

VAN DEMAN:

There are certain specifications in food value the enriched flour has to meet, of course. I don't want to bother you to go into milligrams and all that---

WILDER:

No, I hardly think this is the time and place for milligrams. All the average person needs to know is that the new flour has certain specified minimum amounts of thiamin chloride (vitamin B₁), nicotinic acid, sometimes called the pellagra-preventive factor, and iron, if desired, a third vitamin, riboflavin, and the mineral calcium. All these vitamins occur in the natural wheat berry.

VAN DEMAN:

You're not trying to improve on nature then.

WILDER:

No, indeed, we don't know enough biology to do that.

VAN DEMAN:

Why not let nature do more of the job then?

WILDER:

You mean why not leave more of the natural parts of the wheat berry in the milled flour?

VAN DEMAN:

Yes. Just on the face of it, that seems to me the more logical way.

WILDER:

The proposed standards permit that. If a miller prefers, he can leave in more of the food values of the natural grain, and add enough vitamins and iron in chemical form to bring his product up to the standards for the enriched flour.

VAN DEMAN:

A kind of a 50-50 proposition --- half nature, half chemistry.

WILDER:

Exactly. Or he can go on producing a whole-wheat flour that exceeds the enriched white flour in some food values.

VAN DEMAN:

The label on that would read whole-wheat flour, just as usual I suppose.

WILDER:

Undoubtedly. Whole-wheat flour retains the maximum food values of the wheat berry anyway. There would be no point in calling whole wheat enriched.

VAN DEMAN:

This all certainly goes to show that when a woman does her marketing she needs to know her way around in the labels on the flour bags.

WILDER:

You're right she does. And the less money she has to spend on food, the more important that she know food values.

This step toward improving the food value of bread and flour, for instance, is designed to bring the greatest help to people who need it the most --- people who are down to rock bottom or below.

VAN DEMAN:

That's one of the well-known truths of dietetics and meal planning, --- the less money there is to spend on food, the more of the food calories have to come from cereals.

WILDER:

And even for our American diet in general, wheat flour and its products contribute more calories than any other class of foods.

VAN DEMAN:

Dr. Wilder, just to bring what we've been saying about enriched flour down to bread on the table, I brought along a loaf baked in our experimental kitchen. The breadmaker used the enriched flour just as she does any other bread flour.

Don Fisher, would you give us a hand in unwrapping this package?

ANNOUNCER:

With pleasure, Miss Van Deman.

WILDER:

Very nice looking loaf. As you see, the enriched bread doesn't look any different from bread made with plain white flour --- except it may be a little more creamy colored in the crumb.

VAN DEMAN:

This loaf was made with milk. That gives it more of a cream color. We think milk in bread is a top-notch way to add calcium and some other food values --- besides making the bread taste better.

WILDER:

Did you say taste or toast?

VAN DEMAN:

Both, I'd like to say --- taste and toast. By the way, does the enriched flour lose any of its potency in baking?

WILDER:

Some. Baking causes a loss of about 10 to 15 per cent of the thiamin. Most of that loss is in the crust. So if you want to get the most of the thiamin in the enriched bread, be sure to eat the inside.

VAN DEMAN:

Dr. Wilder, that's very upsetting. Think of all the little girls who are told that if they eat their crusts their hair will curl.

WILDER:

They still need to eat their crusts to give their teeth exercise.

VAN DEMAN:

All right, we'll transfer the crust eating to pearly white teeth. And we'll mind what you say about eating the inside of the loaf to get the benefit of the thiamin and other vitamins.

And we do appreciate, Dr. Wilder, your coming over today and giving us so much background on the enriched flour.

WILDER:

I've been glad to, Miss Van Deman.

ANNOUNCER:

Miss Van Deman, aren't you going to give us a taste of that bread?

VAN DEMAN:

Oh, yes, If you can find a knife to slice it with.

ANNOUNCER:

I'll surely do that. ----- Well, Farm and Home friends, this concludes what Miss Ruth Van Deman and Dr. Russell Wilder have to say about the new enriched flour and bread.

